

Digitizing Radiology: PACS Planning Project

One of the defined goals of VISN 2 is the development of a comprehensive Electronic Medical Record (EMR). A major challenge in achieving this "paperless" medical record has been the inclusion of paper documents and medical images. VISN 2 took a major step in meeting this challenge in 2001 with the installation of the VA developed PACS System known as VistA Imaging. This system has allowed facilities to include Non-VA documents and medical images (CT, MRI, CR, etc.) into the patient's EMR. VistA Imaging also has a clinical display application that provides for the display of "image data" with seamless integration with CPRS.

In January 2004, VISN 2 initiated a project to implement an enhanced radiology service across the network in order to address current VistA Radiology (VistA Rad) shortcomings, and to meet the current and future needs of our Radiology community. The consideration of a commercial radiology PACS solution was endorsed by the IDMC and approved in April 2004.

The primary goal of the PACS Planning Project is to support the migration of Radiology Service to a film-less environment by identifying a film-less solution that will enable access to radiological studies electronically, anytime and anywhere across the Network. PACS enhancement will provide a more comprehensive EMR with increased image availability, selectable routing, increased efficiency and turnaround times, and cost efficiency. Over time, this project will transition the VISN's radiology services into a 95% film-less environment.

Anticipated impact/benefits:

- More comprehensive electronic medical record with increased image availability
- Selectable routing of images to specialists
- Decrease turnaround time on radiology interpretations
- Cost savings by reduction of film supplies and processing
- Increased efficiency of radiology processes
- Decreased lost films and retakes
- Decreased dependency on outside contracts
- Improvement in exam waiting times
- Improved access through virtual physician coverage
- Improved patient satisfaction through improved access to exam and interpretation
- Improved patient safety through reduction in retakes
- Improved staff satisfaction through efficiency of digital environment

For More Information:

Clinical Sponsor: Dr. James Schlehr, (716) 862-8624
Leadership Sponsor: Jack Galvin, (518) 626-6244
Project Manager: Dennis O'Dell, (518) 626-6214
Committee: VISN 2 PACS Planning Committee



What is "PACS"?

Picture Archiving & Communications

System: A computer or network system that uses an image server to exchange X-rays, CT scans and other medical images over a network.

Project Facts:

Source: IDMC, VISN 2 Initiative-affecting all sites that provide radiology services: Albany, Batavia, Bath, Buffalo, Syracuse, Canandaigua, ROPC, and Rome.
Critical Success Factors: Quality, Access, Satisfaction, Value
Status: In Progress

Upcoming Milestones:

02/14/05: Radiology Workflow Analysis and ROI completed by consultant ECC
02/28/05: End of Workflow Analysis Review & Comment Period
03/02/05: RFP Summit in Syracuse
03/16/05: RFP Posted
04/25/05: RFP Proposals Due
06/07/05-06/08/05: Vendor Day
07/04/05: Vendor Selected
07/05/05: Implementation Phase